

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 SAN SA 01151 100530Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 PRS-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15
INR-07 ACDA-07 MCT-01 /053 W
-----100535Z 098508 /13/62

O R 100045Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3636
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO ROUTINE

S E C R E T SAN SALVADOR 1151

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y //PAR 2 SUB (C) LN 8 & 9//

E.O. 11652: XGDS 1 AND 2
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, ES
SUBJECT: APPROACH TO EMBASSY RE POSSIBLE COUP

1. AN EMBOFF WAS APPROACHED MORNING OF MARCH 8 BY A SOURCE HE KNEW PROFESSIONALLY. THE UPPER CLASS PROFESSIONAL CLAIMED TO BE ACTING AS EMISSARY FROM A NOT FURTHER IDENTIFIED GROUP WHICH IS IN THE PROCESS OF PLANNING A COUP. THE GO-BETWEEN SAID HIS FRIENDS HAD EARLIER ATTEMPTED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH DATT BUT, ON LEARNING OF THE LATTER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT-ELECT GENERAL ROMERO, DECIDED TO ABORT THAT APPROACH.

2. THE SOURCE CLAIMED THAT HE IS AWARE OF AT LEAST FOUR RPT FOUR SEPARATE GROUPS PRESENTLY WORKING ON COUP PLANNING: (A) THE FIRST, HE SAID, IS LED BY PRESIDENT MOLINA HIMSELF. THE BUEORY IS THAT THE PRESIDENT INCREASINGLY UNSATISFIED WITH HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH ROMERO AND THE LATTER'S INGRATITUDE, WOULD STAGE SOMETHING TO IMPEDE ROMERO'S INSTALL-

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 SAN SA 01151 100530Z

ATION. (B) THE SECOND PLOT, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, IS BEING PLANNED BY ROMERO WHO, FEARING THAT MOLINA NO LONGER WANTS HIM TO BE HIS SUCCESSOR, WANTS MOLINA DUMPED AND THE WEAK VICE PRESIDENT TO ASSUME OFFICE UNTIL JULY 1.

(C) THE THIRD GROUP DERIVES FROM THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE 1972 ATTEMPTED COUP AGAINST SANCHEZ HERNANDEZ. THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS BUNCH HAS BEEN IN EXILE FOR FIVE YEARS, BUT ONE

OR MORE MEMBERS HAVE CLANDESTINELY RETURNED TO EL SALVADOR AND MADE CONTACT WITH ACTIVE-DUTY OFFICERS. (C) THE LAST GROUP, THE ONE TO WHICH THE SOURCE CLAIMS HE IS AFFILIATED, IS BRAND NEW ON THE SCENE AND IS ATTEMPTING TO COORDINATE ITS EFFORTS WITH THE 1972 PLOTTERS.

3. THE SOURCE EMPHASIZED THAT HE WAS NOT ONE OF THE PLOTTERS HIMSELF. RATHER HE HAD BEEN APPROACHED BY A KEY CIVILIAN WHO ACTS AS LIAISON BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN COMPONENTS OF THE GROUP. HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED FEELERS TO JOIN PREVIOUS COUPS, BUT HAD ALWAYS TURNED THEM DOWN. HIS PARTICIPATION THIS TIME WAS THE RESULT OF HAVING SEEN A "TRUCKLOAD OF BODIES" IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA ON FEBRUARY 28 AND HEARING OF SEVERAL TRUCKLOADS MORE.

4. THE SOURCE SAID HIS GROUP HAD SENT HIM TO THE EMBASSY TO POSE VARIOUS QUESTIONS. THESE WERE:

(A) THE GROUP HAD REASON TO BELIEVE THAT NEIGHBORING HEADS OF STATE MAY HAVE INFORMAL AGREEMENTS WITH GENERAL ROMERO TO COME TO HIS SUPPORT IN THE EVENT OF TROUBLE. NICARAGUA'S SAMOSA, PANAMA'S TORRIJOS, AND GUATEMALA'S LAUGERUD WERE MENTIONED AS POSSIBLE SPURATORS OF ROMERO'S SUCCESSION. THE GROUP ASKED IF THE EMBASSY WAS AWARE OF ANY SUCH AGREEMENTS AND IF SO, WOULD EMBASSY ATTEMPT INFORMALLY TO DISCOURAGE ANY SUCH INTERVENTION?

(B) THE GROUP WANTED TO KNOW IF THE US WOULD RECOGNIZE A GOVERNMENT WHICH CAME TO POWER BY COUP D'ETAT?

(C) THE GROUP WAS INTERESTED IN KNOWING OF EMBASSY PREFERENCE RE DISPOSITION OF THOSE OVERTHROWN, I.E., WHAT SHOULD THEY DO WITH MOLINA AND ROMERO AFTERWARDS?

(D) DOES THE EMBASSY HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON ANY EXILES IN THE SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 SAN SA 01151 100530Z

PANAMANIAN EMBASSY AS A RESULT OF A RECENT UNSUCCESSFUL COUP ATTEMPT?

5. THE SOURCE, WHILE EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS AND HESITANT IN REVEALING INFORMATION, SAID HIS GROUP PLANNED TO REPLACE MOLINA WITH A BROAD-BASED CIVILIAN/MILITARY JUNTA WHICH WOULD RULE UNTIL RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL ELECTIONS WAS POSSIBLE. HE INDICATED HIS GROUP MIGHT BE READY TO MOVE WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

6 THE EMBOFF TOLD HIS VISITOR THAT THE USG WAS COMMITTED TO CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES. HE STATED THAT THE USG COULD GIVE NO ENCOURAGEMENT, PROMISES OR ADVICE TO PERSONS WISHING TO GO OUTSIDE THE CONSTITUTION.

7 LATER, THE SAME DAY, THE SOURCE RECONTACTED THE EMBOFF. HE SAID HE HAD BECOME AWARE OF A FIFTH GROUP OF PLOTTERS ALLEGEDLY CENTERING AROUND COL CASTRO MORAN (A SUPPORTER OF COL CLARAMOUNT, AND INVOLVED IN 1972 EFFORT). VISIBLY NERVOUS, HE TOLD THE EMBOFF THAT HE WOULD NOT BE SPEAKING TO HIM AGAIN BUT PROMISED, IF POSSIBLE, TO GIVE THE EMBASSY "A FEW MINUTES WARNING".

8. COMMENT: COUP TALK IS ALWAYS RAMPANT IN PERIOD OF

POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN EL SALPMOR. THIS PERIOD, AFTER THE PRE- AND POST-ELECTION HAPPENINGS, IS NO EXCEPTION. THE SOURCE IS PROBABLY CORRECT IN HIS ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER OF AGGREGATES TALKING COUP, IF NOT IN HIS DESCRIPTION OF WHO AND WHY. THE EMBASSY DOES NOT WANT TO DISREGARD THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SOURCE REPRESENTS A SERIOUS GROUP, BUT NEITHER DOES IT WISH TO ACCEPT HIS CLAIM THAT A GOLPE IS COMING AT ANY MOMENT, WITHOUT FURTHER CONFIRMATION. THE KEY TO A SUCCESSFUL COUP WOULD BE THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S KEY TROOP COMMANDERS. THE FACT THAT THE SOURCE DID NOT MENTION THE FVMES OF ANY SUCH OFFICERS AS BEING INVOLVED INDICATES A STRONG LIKELIHOOD THAT HIS GROUP DOES NOT HAVE SUCH SUPPORT. AS FAR AS EMBASSY MILITARY CONTACTS KNOW, THE THREE BRIGADE COMMANDERS, THE CAVALRY COMMANDER, AND THE CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE APPEAR LOYAL TO MOLINA AND HIS APPARENT SUCCESSOR; BUT BOTH DATT AND COMDR MILGP HAVE ALSO HEARD PASSING COUP TALK FROM HIGH-LEVEL MILITARY OFFICERS GENERATED APPARENTLY BY DISSATISFACTION AND CONCERN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 SAN SA 01151 100530Z

AT THE TIME OVER HANDLING OF POST-ELECTION EVENTS.
LUBENSKY

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, REPORTS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 10-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SANSAS01151
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: X2 IS A DC ALSO
Executive Order: X1 AND 2
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770137-0573, D770081-0917
Format: TEL
From: SAN SALVADOR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770373/aaaacmed.tel
Line Count: 141
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fdf73dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3149472
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: APPROACH TO EMBASSY RE POSSIBLE COUP
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PGOV, ES
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fdf73dba-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009